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Transcript of President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Matters

11. Policy on Angola

Q. Secretary of State Vance has said that we want to cooperate with the Neto Government in Angola and we just sent a diplomat over to Angola to do just that, to talk to him. A. Yes. Q. Well, a few weeks earlier the C.I.A. Director had been up on Capitol Hill trying to get approval from the Senate for a plan to backdoor weapons to the rebels in Angola. What is the consistency in these two positions and would you have approved that plan?

A. That was never the plan put forward—to send backdoor weapons to the rebels—because that would have been in violation of the American law and I don't believe any responsible person in my Administration would have violated the so-called Clark Amendment which prevents us from either direct or indirect involvement in the internal affairs in Angola.

Our relationship with the Angolan officials has been a fairly consistent one. Ever since I've been in office we have had negotiations or consultations directly with Angolan officials. This is important, first of all because we want to have peace in Southern Africa and Mr. Neto, who is the leader of the Angolan Government has some influence on other African leaders, particularly the leaders of S.W.A.P.O., where we want an agreement in Namibia.

Also we have wanted to hold the Angolan leaders responsible for any future possible invasions into the Shaba Province in Zaire. I also would like to see the Cubans begin to remove their troops from Angola. And a few weeks ago in New York their Foreign Minister, the Angolan Foreign Minister, met with our Secretary of State and suggested additional consultations, which is a continuation of what was done all the time.

We have no desire at this point, no plan to normalize our relationship with Angola but we have never contemplated getting militarily involved in Angola, directly nor indirectly, and this present visit by Mr. McHenry to An-

gola is part of a series of consultations with them.

Q. Mr. President, let me follow that up. I'm not quite sure what you're saying when you say that there was no plan presented to the Senate. The C.I.A. Director, Mr. Turner, did present a document, a written plan to Senator Clark to try to see if Senator Clark thought that this would be acceptable and would not violate the Clark Amendment. The plan called for sending arms to a third country to the rebel forces in Angola. Did you know about that meeting? Did you know about that document? And since others around the Administration did, would you have approved it?

A. I didn't have any idea that the C.I.A. Director had even talked to Senator Clark about it. My impression of it from the news reports and from subsequent information was that he went to consult with Senator Clark to see within the bounds of the law what involvement would be possible in Angola, but I had no knowledge of that nor have I ever intended to send weapons to Angola, either directly or indirectly.